

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the present application.

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A process for preparing a fluorine-containing elastomeric copolymer composition comprising a fluorine-containing elastomeric copolymer, a vulcanizing agent and a vulcanization accelerator,

said process comprising the step of coagulating the copolymer from an aqueous dispersion of the fluorine-containing elastomeric copolymer and drying the resulting coagulate of the copolymer while kneading, wherein

a mixture of mutually soluble components consisting of the vulcanizing agent and the vulcanization accelerator is added to the coagulate,

the mixture of mutually soluble components is a solid solution or a melt,

dehydration in which water is squeezed out from the coagulate is conducted in an extruder, and

the step of drying the coagulate while kneading is conducted in the extruder.

2. (Original) The process according to claim 1, wherein the vulcanizing agent is a polyhydroxy compound or a salt thereof and the vulcanization accelerator is an onium compound.

3. (Canceled).

4. (Original) The process according to claim 1, wherein the mixture of mutually soluble components in a molten state is kneaded with the coagulate of the fluorine-containing elastomeric copolymer in a molten state.

5. (Canceled).

6. (Original) The process according to claim 1, wherein a melt or a solid solution of the vulcanizing agent and the vulcanization accelerator is added to the coagulate during the step of drying the coagulate.

7. (Withdrawn) The process according to claim 1, further comprising a kneading step after the step of drying while kneading, wherein a melt or a solid solution of the vulcanizing agent and the

vulcanization accelerator is added after the completion of the drying step and before the kneading step.

8. (Original) The process according to claim 7, wherein the drying step and the kneading step are conducted by two extruders and a first extruder in charge of the drying step and a second extruder in charge of the kneading step are used..

9. (Original) The process according to claim 7, wherein the first extruder is a twin-screw extruder.

10. (Original) The process according to claim 1, wherein a solid solution of the vulcanizing agent and the vulcanization accelerator is added to the coagulate before the step of drying while kneading.

11. (Original) The process according to claim 1, wherein the vulcanization accelerator is an onium compound and the onium compound is at least one quaternary salt selected from the group consisting of a quaternary ammonium salt and a quaternary phosphonium salt.

12. (Original) The process according to claim 11, wherein the quaternary ammonium salt is 8-benzyl-1,8-diazabicyclo[5.4.0]-7-undecenium chloride and the polyhydroxy compound is 2,2-bis(4-hydroxyphenyl)perfluoropropane.

13. (Withdrawn) The process according to claim 11, wherein the quaternary phosphonium salt is benzyltriphenylphosphonium chloride and the polyhydroxy compound is 2,2-bis(4-hydroxyphenyl)perfluoropropane.

14. (Original) The process according to claim 1, wherein the mixture of mutually soluble components is at least one selected from the group consisting of a mixture of mutually soluble components consisting of a quaternary ammonium salt and a polyhydroxy compound, a mixture of mutually soluble components consisting of a quaternary ammonium salt and a salt of a polyhydroxy compound, a mixture of mutually soluble components consisting of a quaternary phosphonium salt and a polyhydroxy compound, and a mixture of mutually soluble components consisting of a quaternary phosphonium salt and a salt of a polyhydroxy compound.

15. (Withdrawn) The process according to claim 1, wherein the vulcanizing agent is also added in case of adding the mixture of mutually soluble components so that the vulcanizing agent and the vulcanization accelerator are incorporated in a predetermined ratio.

16. (New) The process according to claim 1, wherein the ratio of the vulcanizing agent to the vulcanizing accelerator is controlled by adding the vulcanizing agent after the addition of the mixture of mutually soluble components.

17. (New) The process according to claim 1, wherein the addition of the mixture of mutual soluble components to the coagulate is conducted in the extruder.